

Benham, Katherine

From: kengelbert@stny.rr.com%inter2 [kengelbert@stny.rr.com] on behalf of kengelbert@stny.rr.com
Sent: Friday, May 20, 2005 9:41 AM
To: Benham, Katherine
Subject: Fw: Public Comment on Pasture Requirements

> Dear NOSB:

>

> My wife and I, along with our three sons, own and operate a 120 cow organic

> dairy farm in upstate New York. We fully endorse the NOSB Pasture guidance

> document as written.

>

> Pasture is an extremely important component of organic dairy farming.

Cows

> on pasture have fewer foot and leg problems and fewer health problems

> in general. They are truly happy to be out there grazing. There is

> nothing like watching the cows (even the older cows) run and kick up

> their heels like heifers when they are turned out on pasture for the

> first time in the spring.

>

> A minimum of 30% dry matter from pasture for a minimum of 120 days is easily

> attainable. It represents a very small part of the cows' diet over

> the course of a year. Many organic farms are meeting this minimum now

> with no problem.

>

> When we started grazing our cows in 1989, we took some of our best

> crop

land

> and converted it to pasture. Our neighbors thought we were crazy to

> take such productive land out of crop production. They didn't realize

> that pasture is one of the most important "crops" on the farm. Well

> managed pasture is a very profitable crop. The cows harvest their own high-quality

> feed and spread their own manure. They harvest their own "crop" at

> least

8

> times each year as they rotate through the paddocks. If that same

> land
were
> used for hay, heavy equipment would go over it many times to take 4
cuttings
> off it, causing some compaction of the land and using a great deal of
fuel.
> Pasturing/grazing your cows is a very efficient, ecologically sound
> and sustainable practice.
>
> When a farmer decides to transition his/her farm to organic
> production,
the
> farm needs to come into compliance with the organic standards, not try
> to get the organic standards changed to fit their farm. It is
> imperative to maintain the integrity in the organic industry.
>
> Thank you for your efforts on this very important issue.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Kevin and Lisa Engelbert & Sons
> Engelbert Farms
> 182 Sunnyside Road
> Nichols, NY 13812
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